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PelhamNEWS

Making a difference



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK
Pelham doctor John Song talks about how different hip replacement techniques work at his office Zero Gravity Physiotherapy. See page A5 for story.



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UPFRONT

No concerns about school closure

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

A school that can trace its roots back to a small log cabin built in the 1760s will be closed on June 30, 2017.

But despite Pelham Centre School's long history in the community, there was no opposition to District School Board of Niagara's unanimous decision last Tuesday to close the school and move its 140 students to E. W. Farr Memorial School in Fenwick, which is to be expanded to accommodate them.

Contacted last Wednesday, both Pelham Centre principal Sue Lawrence and school advisory council representative Nadine Purlong would not comment on the board's decision, referring media inquiries to the school board's communications officer Kim Yelding.

Yielding, however, did not return phone calls Wednesday afternoon.

Board chairwoman Dale Robinson, who is also the trustee representing Pelham and Thorold, did not return phone calls either.

Pelham's Ward 2 Councillor Catherine King, who represents neighbouring residents, was surprised by the lack of opposition.

"I can quite honestly say ... I haven't heard any complaints about that school closing," she said. "You have to wonder if the way DSBN has handled it, that the parents, teachers, etc., have come to terms with it."

King said the decision to move the students to E. W. Farr might have also lessened the blow of the school



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

District School Board of Niagara trustees voted unanimously to close Pelham Centre School at the end of the 2017 school year.

closure.

"Even though Fenwick is growing in leaps and bounds, I still think E. W. Farr is still considered a rural school," she said. "Whereas, if they were going to be based into an urban centre, it could be quite different."

But the long term future of the Pelham Centre School building, nestled among the trees on the west side of Centre Street, could be a concern

to the community.

The building will first be offered to other public institutions and governments to be sold for full market value, if it is declared surplus in the fall of 2017.

If there is no interest in the building, it would then be put on the market for sale.

But Pelham Mayor David Augustyn pointed out that redevelopment potential is substantially limiting at its

location.

"The location is in the greenbelt. There aren't any services, sewer and water, etc. It isn't in the urban boundary or directly adjacent to the urban boundary," he said. "There are a limited number of uses for that site. You couldn't turn into retail, and if it was it would have to be agriculturally based."

King, too, was concerned that the building mightulti-

mately sit empty, not unlike empty school buildings in neighbouring communities.

"I always have a concern when you have a vacant building somewhere, particularly in a rural area — because it's not in your face like it would be on an urban street," King said.

But she hopes the DSBN or another school board might develop a plan for the building, or that it might be even-

tually purchased for some other use.

Augustyn said town council will consider the potential of purchasing the building when it becomes available.

"Could it or should it be used for something for a community purpose? We'll have to take a look at it," he said. "We'll put it on our radar."

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Mistaken identity leads to lockdown

Thorold Secondary School was briefly placed in lockdown last Friday morning

after a suspicious person call. Niagara Regional Police say at about 11:30 a.m. they responded to that call in the area of Clairmont Street and Ormond Street North in Thorold. Police say they received

third-hand information a male was seen walking on Clairmont making threats of violence as he proceeded eastbound toward Ormond North.

Officers went to Thorold Secondary School and surrounding businesses to

try to locate the reported suspicious male.

Staff at the school reported to police a young male that didn't appear familiar to them was observed within the school.

Officers placed the school on

lock-down to for safety reasons.

The Emergency Task Unit of the NRPS searched the school, located and identified the male in question as a 17-year-old student of the school whose identity was confused during the lock-down.

The school was released from lock-down and classes and resumed as usual.

Police say the investigation of the initial suspicious person incident is on-going and deemed to be unrelated to the school.



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COMMENT

Provincial budget good news for Niagara and Pelham

DAVE AUGUSTYN

For Postmedia Network

There was lots of excitement across Niagara and in Pelham last week following the release of the 2016 provincial budget.

First, in their budget, released last Thursday, the provincial government committed to extending GO Rail service to Niagara. After submitting our formal business case last spring, all are thrilled to have this commitment in a significant provincial document.

The budget states: "Subject to agreement with freight rail partners, two-way, all-day rail services on the Kitchener and Milton GO corridors, and extension of GO rail service to Niagara and Bowmanville."

It's as if the oft-repeated phrase of my colleague, Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati, came true: "It's not a question of 'if' GO rail comes to Niagara, it's a question of 'when'!"

And, while we don't yet know when, Minister Jim Bradley, MPP St. Catharines and huge GO Rail Niagara advocate, explained last week that Transportation Minister Del Duca will provide more information before the end of June.

As we wait for that, we should keep in mind that it will take some time to get the Niagara GO business plan up and running. At best, the Province and Metrolinx could take some interim steps as early as next year; however, property acquisition, station construction, and track refurbishment for a run all-the-way to the Falls will take a couple of years. And, I wonder whether the opening of the Stony

Creek GO station in 2019 will impact the plan for Niagara.

So, while we must keep pushing for GO Rail, I believe this announcement allows us now to concentrate on developing an integrated regional transit service. With our spring 2017 deadline approaching, I was pleased that the Region, in partnership with Welland, St. Catharines, and Niagara Falls, issued a request for proposals last week to help develop an integrated service.

Second, small municipalities like Pelham (with populations under 100,000) also heard great news in the Budget.

The province announced it would triple — from \$100 million to \$300 million — the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) by 2018-19. This fund will provide predictable funds for critical infrastructure

projects. And, importantly for Pelham, we also heard that the province will no longer penalize growing municipalities with good fiscal records. You will recall that Pelham lobbied the Province for this change since they denied us funding last year because of our community's high property values and high-quality infrastructure compared to other towns.

The province also committed to match the federal government's \$272-million commitment for the jointly administered "Small Community's Fund" to "help address local priorities and support economic growth."

On behalf of council, I thank the province for the commitment to Niagara GO Rail and support of small communities like Pelham.

You may contact Mayor Dave at daveaugustyn@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com.

On bugs and Canada's climate change

If you want to know why we need to take climate change seriously, all you need to do is listen closely to Fiona Hunter.

Hunter, a medical entomologist at Brock University, is leading a team of researchers to determine if Zika virus can carry or transmit the Zika virus, a pathogen the World Health Organization has classified as a global threat.

During a Friday press conference in which Hunter talked about her research, she noted that Niagara is a "gateway to Canada" for bugs. Because of Niagara's geography and climate, it can be an ideal place for a new arrival to set up shop.

While the rest of the press conference returned to the details of her Zika study, the bit about Niagara being a gateway shouldn't be forgotten.

It's very likely a sign of things to come.

When outbreaks of insect-borne illness happened in warmer climates in the past, they were not usually something Canada had to fret over.

Our cold winters were more than just something to complain about. Canadian weather acted as a barrier to all manner of bugs. Even if they arrived, these insects would not be able to get an ecological foothold. It was just too cold for them to survive.

Not anymore. Hunter said the warming of the climate allows all manner of critters, including biting insects that carry pathogens harmful to humans, to migrate north.

In the specific case of Zika, this might have already happened. Hunter said a known vector for Zika, the mosquito species *Aedes albopictus*, has already been found in Ontario. Part of her research is to find out if the species has established itself here.

In short, Zika is the problem de jour but



GRANT
LAFLECHE

the reality of climate change is the driver behind it for Canada.

We still have problems coming to grips with climate change. A recently published University of Montreal study found while 79 per cent of Canadians accept that climate change is real, nearly 40 per cent don't think human activity has anything to do with it.

The science on the causes of climate change has been clear for a long time, so it's disheartening to see so many Canadians denying it.

Then again, maybe I shouldn't be shocked. It's not the first time Canadian scientific ignorance has been on display.

In 2007, an Angus Field survey found that 42 per cent of Canadians believe humans and dinosaurs co-existed. That belief is a 65-million-year-old error that essentially means a breathtaking number of Canadians look upon the Dinosaurs as less of a cartoon and more of a docudrama.

Not accepting scientific reality taints the way we approach handling the problem. If we deny that human technology is a significant player in climate change, we're going to be less likely to consider changing how we use that technology.

So we either about, saying things like "Well, yes, climate change might be a problem but we need to create jobs first, then we can worry about it." Which is like falling from a plane and being thirsty, and saying after you have a drink you'll consider pulling the



JULIE JOCSAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Brock University scientist Dr. Fiona Hunter, one of Canada's key researchers on the Zika virus, feeds some mosquitoes with her own arm to show the media. Hunter answered questions from the media and gave a glimpse inside of her lab at Brock University where they are currently studying the virus.

ripcord.

As a result, we make very little progress on coping with climate change while disease-carrying insects, which are totally indifferent to human conceits, migrate into our environment.

The problem is compounded when you consider how few experts there are tracking how climate change impacts things like insect migration.

Brock University is lucky to have someone with Hunter's chops working there. But she says the community of medical entomologists is very small and shrinking.

She told me there just aren't that many

people stepping into the field. She's concerned when her generation retires, there won't be enough new entomologists to replace them.

Given climate change's possible negative impacts on human health, we need scientists in the watchtowers. But we don't teach science nearly well enough, so culturally we don't respect it much nor place much emphasis on it. As a consequence, we don't value people like Hunter as much as we should.

If that doesn't change, we could end up digging a hole so deep there will be no climbing out of it.

LOCAL NEWS

Surgeon brings cutting edge surgery to Welland

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

If you're in need of cutting edge hip surgery you needn't go further than the Welland hospital.

Pelham doctor John Song introduced direct anterior approach hip replacement surgery to the Welland hospital about a year ago.

The direct anterior approach is new in popularity, but Song said it has been around for a long time.

"In Canada it is just making some inroads."

Song knows of only four other surgeons who perform this procedure regularly in Ontario. He said in Ontario the surgery is only available in London, Ottawa and Welland.

Song's patient Robert Shaver, 63, has been impressed with Song's abilities as a surgeon and introducing the procedure to Niagara.

"When he said to me they do this surgery in London, Ottawa, and now Welland I was impressed ... It's proactive for the benefit of the patients," Shaver said.

When the hospital needed a new surgical table Song asked to have one necessary for this surgery. The operating table has to have the suspension of a leg independently from the table. The table needs special attachments to make the surgery possible for all body types.

"You need some support from the hospital to provide that equipment, and that equipment is not cheap," Song said.

Song said the equipment is double what a standard operating table costs, at about \$130,000. He said the hospital

foundation helped to make the purchase possible.

"I saw this as an opportunity to have something different. It might not have been me, but it might have been another surgeon one day who would be able to do this operation and use the table to do this. We should be ready in case that happened," Song said.

The major difference between the conventional surgery and the direct anterior surgery is where the incision is made on the hip. For the direct anterior procedure the incision is made on the front of the hip. This provides the opportunity to go between muscles as opposed to cutting through. Song said the conventional way of making an incision on the side of the hip results in a bigger incision and the muscle having to be sewn back together.

Song said when people receive the conventional hip replacement surgery they may have a limp for some time after the procedure and some never overcome the limp.

The direct anterior approach allows the surgeon to go around the muscles meaning less impact on walking after surgery.

"I was up and moving around in the room, I rested, and by the third time I was in the hallway," Shaver said.

When people receive conventional surgery it could take anywhere from four to six weeks to heal. With the direct anterior approach Song said using a cane is optional and walking is much more comfortable within the first few days after surgery.

Malierberg@postmedia.ca



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Pelham doctor John Song talks about how different hip replacement techniques work at his office Zero Gravity Physiotherapy on Thursday in Welland.

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LOCAL NEWS

Students get a healthy start

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Niagara Nutrition Partners (NNP) tries to see that no child goes hungry in our region.

The organization, founded in 1998, works with schools through-

out the region to provide meals for students. NNP promotes the connection between healthy food choices and improved learning.

In Niagara there are more than 16,000 students at about 150 schools who use the program

each day. The organization provides breakfast, lunch and snack programs.

"It's great for kids who arrive at school hungry to have breakfast and get on with their day. It makes for a much better day for

them, more concentration ... also better behaved," said Anne Kirkpatrick, program manager at NNP.

What makes this program unique is it is based on feeding hungry children, not on feeding those who are socioeconomically challenged.

Kirkpatrick said children come to school hungry for a variety of reasons so it's important to make a difference for everyone.

"The fact that anyone can come to the program makes it so successful," she said.

Each year the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services grants up to 15 per cent of the NNP's budget for running programs. The rest of the money

has to be raised through donations and grants from other organizations including United Way.

Shelly Dobble, Fonthill Sobeyes supervisor, and Ilse Mendez de Miranda, Sobeyes staff, presented a cheque to NNP on behalf of store owner Ron Kore last Wednesday morning.

Kore raised \$8,000 for NNP by hosting a golf tournament.

Kirkpatrick said this is a "huge amount of money for us."

"He is just a huge supporter of what we do and about feeding kids," Kirkpatrick said.

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PHOTOS BY MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Anne Kirkpatrick, program manager at Niagara Nutrition Partners, right, discusses what the organization does for Niagara schools, last Wednesday in Pelham.



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Sunday, Mar 6 No Skate Tuesday, Mar 8 4:00-5:00 pm Friday, Mar 11 3:30-4:30 pm	Thursday, Mar 10 1:00-2:00 pm Parent/Preschool Tuesday, Mar 8 1:00-2:00 pm Friday, Mar 11 10:00-11:00 am	Monday, Mar 7 1:00-2:00 pm NEW! Contact Julie Cook at jcook@pelham.ca or 905-892-2607 ext. 329 for details	Tuesday, Mar 8 8:00-9:00 am Friday, Mar 11 9:00-10:00 am	Monday, Mar 7 9:30-10:45 am Thursday, Mar 10 10:30-11:45 am	Thursday, Mar 10 9:30-10:30 am Hockey Skills Hour Monday, Mar 7 11:00-12:00 pm Thursday, Mar 10 2:00-3:00 pm	Tuesday, Mar 8 7:00 pm PLAYOFFS

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Lunch today with the most place Nathan's Corner (sandwiches or grilled steaks and drink).	Lunch today with the most place Subway (sandwiches, soups, drinks).	Lunch today with the most place Nathan's Corner (sandwiches and soups) and a drink.	Lunch today with the most place McDonald's (pizza, bread and a drink).	Lunch today with the most place McDonald's (hamburgers, fries, snack and drink).
March 8	March 10	March 16	March 17	March 18

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West Lincoln man lucky in lottery

SUPPLIED PHOTO
William (Morgan) Jakobsen and Jose (Joe) Soares of Calstor Centre will split their \$2 million in winnings from the Feb. 17 Ontario 49 draw.



Postmedia Network

A West Lincoln man and his friend have won \$2 million in a recent Ontario 49 draw.

Jose (Joe) Soares of Calstor Centre and William (Morgan) Jakobsen of Burlington will split their winnings from the lucky ticket purchased for the Feb. 17 draw.

In addition to the \$2 million, the pair won \$2 for matching the last number on their Encore play.

"I scanned our tickets on the self checker. At first I thought we won \$2,000, then \$200,000 and then I realized that there were way too many zeros," Jakobsen, in a news release, said while collecting the cheque at the OLG Prize Centre in Toronto. "After validating the ticket, I danced around the store."

Jakobsen then called Soares to share the good news.

"He called and said 'You are a millionaire! I thought he was full of beans,' Soares said with a smile.

The two former co-workers have been playing the lottery together for 30 years.

"We get together once a month for coffee and I buy our tickets once a week," said Jakobsen, who plans to use his winnings to pay off his mortgage and buy a new car.

Soares intends to use his portion of the prize money to purchase a home in Portugal.

"This win will make life easier. We'll be able to relax and help more people," Soares said.

The winning ticket was purchased at N.E. Mart on William O'Connell Boulevard in Burlington.

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Pelham library leaps into early book sale

WAYNE CAMPBELL
Special to Postmedia

Fiction is hot, non-fiction is not.

Melanie Taylor-Ridgway, volunteer co-ordinator at the Pelham Public Library, has seen increasing sales of novels, mysteries and other fiction at the library's semi-annual used-book sales.

However, books about cooking, home repair, car maintenance and other do-it-yourself topics have dropped off.

"So much instruction is on the Internet," she said.

Readers, she said, can buy fiction at the sale and donate them back when finished.

The spring book sale — it runs until Saturday — is a month early. A tight squeeze between March break (March 14-18) and Easter weekend (March 25-27) affected the timing.

Pelham library holds a similar used book sale at the end of August.

The sale at the Fontheill branch is held during regular library hours: Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and on back-a-bag Saturday, noon to 5 p.m.

Typically, the public library raises

about \$3,000 during each sale.

"It is money we come to count on," said Taylor-Ridgway. "We use it to help finance our children's, seniors and young-adult programs." It will supplement fees for March break activities, summer reading programs, book clubs and instructors for bridge and other coaching.

The library receives donations of books throughout the year and will continue to take them during the sale.

"We have about 150 boxes downstairs."

Library staff and volunteers will sort the donated books and keep some for the library's collection.

"Many are new or almost new," said Taylor-Ridgway.

Some books are shared with community groups holding book sales while others go to organizations sending them to developing countries such as Haiti.

Among the soft cover, hard cover, collectibles, children's books, CDs, DVDs and puzzles at this sale are a large number of large-print books and mysteries.

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IKEA opens new-format store at Fairview Mall

DON FRASER

Postmedia Network

They were among the first to enter IKEA's newest location at Fairview Mall.

Last Thursday, friends Marie Ricard and Jan Davis strolled with purpose into the "pick-up and order point" — a complimentary Danish and coffee in hand.

Around them, the store's 30 employees offered them a cheer and rhythmic "clap, clap."

"Yaa-y!" said the two, responding to the welcome from gold shirt and denim-wearing workers.

"We love IKEA, the products they offer," said Ricard, echoing her friend's sentiments. "We're addicted."

Both said the new location, where the Future Shop used to be, is a welcome commercial addition to the community.

City economic development manager Brian York hailed the new store as a "retail revival; this is the evolution of retail and we're extremely proud IKEA is testing it in our market."

The new "pick-up" format is part of a global pilot

for markets where there are currently no stores.

At the St. Catharines location, about 100 large-scale items such as beds and tables are on display — other takeaway items can be purchased there, such as throw-pillows, plates and Scandinavian-style home decor.

Customers who have shopped online or at another IKEA store will also be able to pick up their products locally. The St. Catharines site features a scaled-down showroom and tablets to help shoppers buy online.

It is expected to mean cheaper delivery time and costs for customers, with orders to be delivered to the pick-up store for \$20. Once delivered, a notification e-mail is sent.

The location also features a "home-furnishing inspiration" area, with stations to help customers plan what they buy for their home. A large section of the 25,133-square-metre store is used as storage for shipped items.

IKEA currently has 12 stores across Canada as well as three other pick-

up and order points, in Quebec City, London and Whitby.

IKEA Canada president Stefan Sjostrand said the company is using the format to be more accessible to shoppers, with the Canadian pilot to include six locations.

"This is huge for us," said St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik, who attended the store's Thursday ribbon cutting. "It's a global brand that has chosen to be in St. Catharines, with an innovative new retail product that is ahead of the curve."

"And I think based on 'location, location, location,' it's going to be very successful," Sendzik said. "We're proud they chose St. Catharines as a place to invest."

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Region slammed over bridge project

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia network

Missing documentation paired with a lack of transparency and poor communication are among findings of a value-for-money audit conducted on the Burgoyne Bridge replacement project. The audit, completed by Deloitte Consulting, was presented to Niagara Region's

audit committee last Wednesday, raising substantial concern among councillors about how the multimillion-dollar project was initially handled.

The audit includes all activities up to the contractor selection tender closing.

Michael Ingram, of Deloitte, presented the firm's findings, as well as a series of recommendations for improve-

ment.

It was concluded the decision-making process regarding the project was not sufficiently documented or communicated. In addition, the procurement process was not as transparent or competitive as it should have been.

There was missing supporting documentation regarding the project's Building Can-

ada Fund application, the procurement process, documents related to project risk and awarding of preliminary design work to Delcan Corp.

The procurement process for the contract administration and inspection services was deemed not open, transparent or competitive.

Ingram said he does not have issue with the chosen

contractor, but rather the lack of rationale and documentation in the procurement file as to why Delcan was chosen.

Communication, he said, does not indicate how the contracts went from an original request for prequalification of \$1.2 million to awarding an additional \$4 million in work to Delcan.

Criteria for advancement, including a minimum score, was not included in the request for prequalification package. The evaluations indicate there was a standard approach used to look at the different tenders, but not an articulation to the public and the bidders.

The Region, Ingram said, "took on a project that was more complex and more sizable than things that had been executed by the Region in the past and used project management techniques you would've for much smaller projects," Ingram said.

"If I was to give a comparative view, you hosted a dinner party and then opened a restaurant. They're quite different and require a different set of skills and techniques."

The project's detailed design contract saw a \$730,000 increase over what was initially estimated.

While the Region had a 10 per cent contingency in place to deal with issues like changes in soil conditions and revisions to the scope and project approach, that number should ideally have been between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, he said.

"I think their ability to understand all of the elements of good risk management and good project management were stretched as well."

There was not appropriate risk reporting for the size and complexity of the project, he said.

Several councillors, as well as Regional Chair Alan Caslin, questioned whether there was any sign of fraudulent activity regarding the project.

Ingram said the audit did

not reveal "an enormous gap" in what the Region paid for the work compared to what it would have likely cost under a different process.

"There was nothing that said to us a fraud had occurred," he said, "but what concerned us, what we did see, is points along the way where there was a lack of control."

Caslin asked whether the Region received value for its money from Delcan.

Ingram said, he did believe value was received for the cost.

Ingram called it "appropriate" for the Region to create a standard project report touching on key elements of project performance, governance and accountability that is delivered to council on a regular basis. Risk management practices should be established and risk reporting and escalation protocols put in place to allow for regular updates to council on a project-by-project basis, he said.

In a memorandum, Niagara Region chief administrative officer Harry Schlange said the audit reflects several areas "that were weak or deficient" when the project activities occurred between February 2009 and November 2013.

A number of those recommendations have been addressed to some degree since 2014, he said, including the implementation of cross-functional project teams, centralization of finance and purchasing functions, personnel changes, and enhancements to criteria for sole and single sourcing.

Structure has also increased regarding project management and procurement practices, Schlange said.

"Work has been immediately initiated to review and address all of the recommendations."

A management action plan is expected to be presented to council in the near future.

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LOCAL NEWS

Canuck ban disappoints Brock prof Jeopardy! winner

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

What is a big disappointment? asks Eric Dolansky, who finds it a shame Canadians are now ineligible to compete on *Jeopardy!*

Dolansky, a Brock University business professor, was a two-time winner in 2006. He appeared in three episodes of the Los Angeles-taped show.

After winning the first two, he took home US\$48,000.

"I really had a lot of fun," Dolansky said. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance and I ended up doing fairly well."

While rules say Dolansky, 40, can't return as a former contestant, it's a moot point given the U.S. television show now excludes Canadians from competing on the game show.

Last week, the show's Canadian host, Alex Trebek, confirmed a change in eligibility on the show's online registration.

Trebek said in an e-mail Canadians were prevented from taking the online test "since the show must now comply with new rules set

down by the Canadian government."

Canada passed anti-spam legislation in 2014 and a new digital privacy law the following year. However, it's unclear whether either would prevent a Canadian from using the show's online system.

Dolansky applied to be on the show in May 2005, then as a PhD student at Western University's Ivey Business School.

At the time, there was no online test, with the game show website indicating a testing site at Toronto's Royal York Hotel.

"There were about 80 of us in my session," said the Ottawa-born academic.

He showed his mettle on a 50-question written test and became one of nine who passed that and a mock game of *Jeopardy!* That placed them into a contestant pool, with a chance of being called out over a period of time.

Dolansky got the game-show summons in March 2006 inviting him to California, along with a few changes of clothing in case

he won several games during the day's taping.

As it turned out he won two, but doesn't remember much.

"You are so focused and in the moment. It all goes by incredibly fast," said the Oakville resident, who has been a Brock professor since 2008. "You don't want to seem stupid, to come across badly. You want to win; that's why you showed up there."

There was also a degree

of camaraderie between the contestants, he said: "We were all facing this unusual situation together."

"It was fun and quick, and I remember not being too stressed out about the scores ... you're trying to hit that buzzer and give the appropriate response."

As for the Canadian *Jeopardy!* firewall, "it's disappointing."

"Canadians have done well, despite the somewhat biased focus on American

history and geography," Dolansky said. "But that's something we all know going in."

"It's disappointing other Canadians won't necessarily be able to get the same experience."

Dolansky is not the only Niagara connection to *Jeopardy!*

In July 2015 Bridget Ker — then a St. Catharines Museum employee — finished second as a contestant.

When contacted about

the game show controversy, Ker, 34, was hopeful.

"I have to imagine it will be resolved," said the Hamilton resident, who now works for the Ontario Lung Association. "It sounds like they are doing this in response to the anti-spam laws in Canada."

"And it's more of an abundance of caution than anything."

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— with files from Reuters

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Jail time for 2014 Thanksgiving death

TOMY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

A speeding Niagara Falls driver who killed a pedestrian on Niagara Street in St. Catharines on the 2014 Thanksgiving weekend is expected to receive a jail term when he returns to court next month for sentencing.

John Pullia, 34, appeared in Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines last Tuesday and pleaded guilty to a charge of dangerous driving causing death.

Mary Martin, 61, an inside worker at Canada Post, was killed at about 8:30 p.m. on Oct. 11, 2014, while walking home from a trip to the grocery store at Grantham Plaza.

Martin was struck and killed by speeding Dodge Ram pickup truck driven by Pullia just a few blocks from where Martin lived.

Assistant Crown attorney Tom Jacob said Pullia had picked up a female passenger and was travelling southbound on Niagara Street and accelerated his vehicle to a speed of 157 km/h in a 50-km/h zone. It was a Saturday night, the weather was clear and the road was dry.

The Crown said Pullia passed a vehicle on a blind bend in the road and lost control of his truck that continued onto the shoulder. Martin was struck by the truck, thrown 20 metres and hit a fence. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Pullia's truck crossed a yard and hit a Toyota that was parked in a driveway. The Toyota, which was destroyed, was pushed into a van. Pullia and his passenger had to be removed from the pickup truck.

Pullia was given a breath test and his first reading was 110 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood, and the second reading was 91. The legal limit is 80.

The Crown said it was not likely it could get a conviction on the drinking and driving charge.

The courtroom was filled to capacity on Tuesday, with some people having to stand. There were many supporters for the victim's family, along with friends and family of the accused.

Pullia kept his head down during most of Tuesday's proceedings while he sat at a table near the front of the courtroom with Toronto defence lawyer Frank Addario.

Martin left behind three daughters, Janice, Jessica and Jillian, who all sub-

mitted victim impact statements, along with other members of the family.

Many spectators had difficulty holding back their emotions while the statements were being read.

Janice said she remembers the knock on her door that night from a police officer who informed them there had been an accident and her mother had not survived. She called her two sisters in the middle of the night and broke the news to them.

"I tried to stay calm, but now more than a year later I still can't think of her without crying," she said. The two grandchildren, she added, Ivy, 13, and Mia, 5, have been left angry, sad and confused about why their grandmother was taken from them.

Jessica Martin, the second daughter, said she was going on a trip and that was part of the last conversation she had with her mother. After getting the news about her mother's death, she nearly passed out and quickly made arrangements to return home.

Jessica said she questions if things would have turned out differently if she had not gone on that trip and not asked her mother to walk over and feed their cats while they were away.

"Never in a million years would I have thought my mother would die from someone else's mistake," said Jessica, adding her mother was only three months away from retiring and their Thanksgiving celebration will never be the same.

"This was a tragic and senseless death," she said.

The Crown said speed, bad driving and alcohol were all factors in this case. These types of cases, he added, have a tremendous impact on the victim, the community and the accused and nothing can be said that will ease the emotional impact.

Jacob suggested a jail sentence of 3½ years with a 10-year driving prohibition. The defence read a letter of apology from his client who accepted full responsibility for his behaviour.

"There is no excuse for what I did. Words cannot describe what happened," Pullia said in his letter. "I have hurt people who did not need to be hurt. I have learned my lesson too late."

He also apologized to his family for putting them through this ordeal.

Addario said his client has operated a small business doing landscape and concrete work, but he will need to shut that down because he will not be allowed to drive and it will affect him operating certain types of machinery.

"His conduct was out of character," said Addario, who described Pullia as a hard worker who has support from his mother, sister and friends.

The defence recommended a three-year jail sentence with a five-year driving prohibition.

"The cause of this accident was his dangerous driving, not his alcohol consumption," said Addario.

Judge Joseph Nadel adjourned sentencing to March 24, saying he needed time to review some of the material that had been filed.

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Two hikers rescued from gorge

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

Two international students who were hiking and became lost in the lower Niagara Gorge had to be rescued Sunday Feb. 21.

Niagara Parks Police, Niagara Falls Fire Department and Niagara Emergency Medical Services responded to a 911 call for help at about 6:45 p.m.

Police said the male hikers, who are both 26 years of age, went hiking at about 3 p.m., entering the gorge from the Niagara Parkway in the vicinity of Whirlpool Road. While hiking they became lost due to darkness and attempted exiting the gorge.

Police were able to locate the hikers at about 7 p.m., just south of Hubbard's Point near River Road.

The fire department set up their aerial truck and with assistance from the Niagara Parks Police High Angle Team both students were lifted out of the gorge and returned back to street level.

The hikers did not suffer any injuries. NPP Sgt. Chris Gallagher reminds hikers they are welcome to enjoy the natural environment the NPC has to offer, but they are reminded to stay on marked trails, hike in daylight and with a friend, wear suitable shoes and clothing and bring a cellphone.

In addition, tell someone where you are going, bring water and energy bars,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Niagara Parks Police, Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Services rescued two hikers that were lost in the lower Niagara Gorge in Niagara Falls. With help from the Niagara Parks Police High Angle Team both hikers were lifted from the Gorge and returned back to street level. Neither hiker, both international students, suffered any injuries.

check weather conditions prior to hiking and know your physical limits.

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